



ANIMAL ADVISORY BOARD (AAB)

Pre-Meeting Committee Minutes for July 22, 2013 (with approved amendments included)

Present: Daphna Nachminovitch, Barbara Hays, Debbie Donour, Debra Griggs, Jean Linman, Dorothy Winn, Kathy Galvin, Rachel Bellis, Doug Beckmann, David Freeman, Jamie O'Grady, Jake Roos, Rose Amour, Laurelyn Flowers

I. WELCOME

- Jean opened with the meeting with the goal of the AAB: Decreasing the number of animals coming into the animal care center (ACC) and increasing the number of animals going out of the ACC.
- Jean distributed copies of the 2012 VDACS statistics and a copy of NACC Comprehensive Report between 1/1/2013 and 6/30/2013 received from the City.
- Jean read out the different topics that she received via email and her own ideas:

Programs to decrease animals coming into shelter

- spay/neuter--TNR is "trap, neuter & return" - progressive community cat programs
- shelter surrender intervention programs
- adoption follow up programs

Programs to increase numbers leaving shelter:

- high volume adoption programs
- collaboration programs with rescue partners
- transfer of animals to agencies within the community
- comprehensive foster program.

II. OPEN DISCUSSION

- **Euthanasia** Dorothy offered two different master behaviorists who may be able to volunteer time to assist where needed. She has their contact information and can provide that.

Jake explained the reasons outlined in the ACC data for euthanasia and explained that time and space are a factor in *behavior management*. Jake reported that if the ACC had more time and space, more animals could be saved. *Behavior severe* animals have clear aggression issues. Euthanasia decisions look at a spectrum of issues from behavior, health, etc. it also takes into consideration the number of animals at the shelter at that moment.

- **Relationships with other Facilities** Dorothy asked if the ACC has a working relationship with other facilities that could take transfers at those times when there is no space?

Jake explained transfers are difficult because they are not usually able to take the animal when those animals are legally ready. There is a number of great and reputable organizations (German Shepherd Rescue, Cat Rescue, Hope for Life, etc.) that ACC works with but historically ACC has not had great luck with transfers happening in a timely manner.

Jake further reported that the NSPCA does not have the capacity to take immediate transfers. He explained that he did not trust the NSPCA with any transfers. Barb stated that NSPCA and ACC meet monthly, but are not working as true partners. (Note: Rob did not attend the meeting to be able to discuss the SPCA program.)

Debra brought up a recent situation involving two dogs sheltered at NACC where NSPCA had offered to take these two animals. Jake reported that the animals the NSPCA offers to accept are the most adoptable animals from ACC which leaves ACC with the less adoptables.

RECOMMENDATION: Debra suggested that ACC and NSPCA meet to discuss issues regarding sheltering of Norfolk animals. Debra urged that a robust working relationship must exist between ACC and NSPCA and that, whatever was needed to cause that, including a facilitated dialogue must happen. It was discussed

and agreed by Committee members that both shelters must meet and learn how to work together effectively. Jake suggested that NSPCA Board members also be present.

- **Owner Surrender Program** The idea of appointments was discussed and Jake responded that the notion if an owner is going to surrender an animal it is best to not place obstacles in their way. Jake reported that he researched a while back the intake numbers at Portsmouth Humane Society, under the past Executive Director, and found that with a stricter surrender policy their number of intakes stayed the same, though the number of strays increased and surrenders decreased. Jake reported that this causes an unexpected challenge for the shelter, because of mandatory stray holds, which ties up space, whereas a surrendered animal is available for adoption immediately. A surrendered animal also allows the owner to discuss behavior issues, health history, etc. This added information allows a shelter to better assess the adoptability of the animal. Barb and Jake reported that they much prefer to receive owner surrenders versus a stray animal for these reasons.

RECOMMENDATION: an adoption follow-up system. The Committee consensus was that this was a great idea, though Barb said that ACC does not currently have the capacity to do it. The Committee felt that volunteers could do it.

RECOMMENDATION: Interviewer for owner surrenders to allow the owner to verbalize their issues and perhaps see if the owner just needs assistance.

Note: Jake reported that there needs to be a way to find the owners before they decide to come to the shelter, often by the time they are at the shelter with the animal they have justified the reason and the decision is made.

RECOMMENDATION: Create an outreach media campaign. Debbie and Dorothy suggested to look to social media as a resource for getting resources out about issues that could lead to an owner surrendering their animal i.e. behavior, lack of money for food, etc. There were suggestions for commercials, working with the local news media to promote animal adoption, etc. There was discussion of an App for phones that show lost and adoptable animals, much like [petfinder.com](https://www.petfinder.com).

RECOMMENDATION: Jean requested that the City's ACC page be more robust, with more resources. There are currently no files in the document center on the City's website for ACC.

Follow-up item: Barbara will send out reports on the number of adoptable animals and the length of stay.

- **Identifying the location a stray is picked-up** Barb reported that currently Animal Control and ACC do not use compatible searchable software. ACC uses Chameleon. The lack of compatible software has lead to weaknesses in the data. There is no way to run reports on the trends on where animals have been picked-up. This would be great data for direct outreach and for target spay/neuter

RECOMMENDATION: Find a way to have ACC and Animal Control use compatible software.

- **Microchip pilot program** Barb and Debra discussed that a microchip company is interested in piloting a lifetime license program. The current pet licensing program is not effective as an identification tool for stray animals. The microchip program is a much more effective (permanent) way to identify an owner. Norfolk could be the first city in the nation to tie the microchips and pet tags together.
- **City funded Spay and Neuter** Jean is working with Sarah Crawford on a formula to show the number of spay and neuters to impact future Norfolk animal numbers. Jean will bring it to the next meeting.

There was previous discussion about the number of spays to impact animal numbers is in the range of 7,000 spays or neuters per year for 7 years.

The committee will make a recommendation to City Council on a City funded spay and neuter program.

RECOMMENDATION: Ask NRHA to require that all animals on their property be spayed or neutered. There are resources that could spay and neuter the animals for free or for reduced prices. Daphna mentioned that with target spay and neuter they could go right into the target area and provide free spay and neuter services.



- **Spay or Pay** Barbara talked about the Spay or Pay program that she developed and implemented in Massachusetts. She will send out information on that program and the committee can discuss it at next week's meeting

Meeting ended at 7:30. The next committee meeting will be July 29, 2013 at 5:30.